Happy Go Lucky

by MRS. HARRY PUGH SMITH

© WNU

CHAPTER VII

Continued from last week

"Nonsense," snapped Gloria. "It's true that plays are not written. They are rewritten. With no more experience than you've had in the theatre, you've done a bang-up job. What you need is some actual stage work.

Tony made a wry face. "It's a vicious circle," he said. "You can't do a play without experience and you can't get the experience until you do the play."

"That brings me to a suggestion," murmured Gloria. "Why don't we put on the first act in the Little Theatre during Labor Day week-end? Pinkney Law is coming down to see me that Saturday. I can get him to the performance, if that means anything."

"But you've refused all along to have anything to do with the Little Theatre group here!"

"Because they are a bunch of nit-wits," remarked Gloria. "I think three weeks' work on the first act in actual rehearsal will do you more good than six months anywhere else. There's nothing like seeing your lines fall flat for teaching you how to time them."

"I realize that," said Tony humbly. "Good Lord, Gloria, if you really would put this act on for me I'd be indebted to you for the rest of my life."

Gloria smiled. "It's a bargain."

Barbara spoke for the first time. "Don't you think Tony should go ahead and finish the other two acts while he's got such a good start?" she asked uneasily.

Gloria looked at her and raised her eyebrows. "No, I don't think so, but perhaps you know best. After all, I've had only fifteen years in the theatre," she said with elaborate sarcasm.

"You don't understand, kid," Tony said. "An opportunity to work out this first act in actual practice with an actress of Gloria's ability is the sort of chance struggling playwrights dream of."

The Little Theatre group when they heard the news was both piqued and flattered. Gloria Havener had consistently snubbed any attempt to interest herself in the organization. Now that she had suddenly decided to relent the members could not afford to refuse her overture although among themselves they resented her. For the next three weeks Gloria practically took over the Little Theatre.

Gloria and Tony cast the various parts. Tony would have given them to his friends, but Gloria was quite ruthless. She said Wanda Lytle had no more dramatic talent than a broomstick. Wanda was president of the Little Theatre in Westhaven. Gloria said if she was going to do the play at all, she would do it right. Curiously enough she demanded Hank Woods for the comic lead, although he was not even a member of the group. To Hank's utter astonishment, she said he could act. Tony was delighted.

During rehearsals Tony was home barely long enough to catch a wink of sleep. He always expected to be there for dinner, but something invariably came up. More often than not he telephoned Barbara that he'd only have time to grab a hot dog before rehearsal. "See you at the theatre, kid," he would say. "And after we get through, we'll take a ride and catch a little air. I thought you looked sort of peaked this morning."

Usually it was after midnight and both Tony and Barbara were reeling with fatigue. So they seldom took a ride and finally Barbara practically stopped going to the theatre.

It was so terribly lonely, never seeing Tony, eating her dinners alone, having nobody to talk to at night. She was always in bed, though not always asleep, when Tony came in. He slept till the last possible minute every morning and then was so groggy that conversation was beyond him.

Barbara's pride was hurt, her confidence badly shaken. She was far from well and the heat was enough to play havoc with anyone's temper. Otherwise she never would have gone out to dinner with Martin Fagg. As it was, it happened accidentally. Martin had bought a new car, a small conservative sedan, the first automobile he had ever owned. He was very proud of it and anxious to show it off. Overtaking Barbara on her way home one afternoon, he stopped beside her with a flourish. "How do you like it?" he asked.

"Why, Martin, how nice!" exclaimed Barbara.

"It's not the biggest model or the most expensive," he murmured, "but I can afford it and that's more than a lot of car owners can say. Hop in," he suggested, "and I'll run you home. You ought to see her take a hill," boasted Martin. "If you have time, let's go out the river road a piece and I'll show you how she can step."

"Time is the one thing I have plenty of," murmured Barbara, thinking of the long hours before her until she could possibly begin looking for Tony to come home.

They went much farther than they intended. Suddenly it was quite dark and they were thirty miles from home. "I bet you're starved," said Martin contritely.

"I do feel a bit empty," Barbara confessed.

Martin looked embarrassed.

"There's a roadhouse about a mile farther along where they have grand chicken dinners. If Tony wouldn't object, Barbara, I'd love to take you to dinner. It would be like old times."

"Why should Tony object?" asked Barbara, her voice tinged with acid. "I think he and Gloria Havener have had dinner together every night this week, either at her house or on the set."

They had a table facing the river. There was a little breeze, sweet with clover hay. The chicken was delicious. She enjoyed talking to Martin, too. At least he did not talk down to her. "You have the levelest head of any woman I know," he insisted. His attitude was balm to Barbara's injured feelings.

"This has done me a lot of good," said Martin when he let her out at her door at nine o'clock. "I wish we could do it again some time."

Barbara glanced up at the darkened windows of the flat. It would be midnight at least before Tony came home, probably later, for they were having a dress rehearsal.

"Why not?" she asked.

There were to be two performances of Tony's play on Friday and Saturday nights. It was the latter to which Pinkney Law was expected. Barbara sat through the first with her heart sinking lower and lower. Nothing quite came off. The dialogue missed fire at all the big moments, the action sagged. She thought it a dismal failure. Tony thought so too. She knew the instant she caught sight of him. "Well," he said, trying to grin, "of all the flops!"

"Don't be silly!" Gloria snapped. "Of course everything went wrong tonight. Wait till Law is in the audience."

She made Tony go home with her and she mixed him a stiff drink and talked him out of his depression. By the time Barbara and Tony reached the flat, he was as blithe and exuberant as ever.

She thought he was asleep when she crowled in beside him, but he stirred and put his arm drowsily about her. "The crowd tried to take me to a ribbing today," he said. "They said that you went driving with Martin Fagg the other night and had dinner wth him out in the country. Wanda swore she saw you." Tony chuckled. "As if I'd fall for a yarn like that!"

Barbara stiffened. "It wasn't a yarn, Tony. I did go driving with Martin and we did have dinner together. What do you expect me to do? Sit here in this hot little dump night after night and swelter while you and Gloria Havener go round and round?"

Tony did not speak for a moment and Barbara held her breath, then he laughed sleepily. "It's all right with me, suger, if it is with you," he said. The next moment he was asleep.

She was stiff in her manner the next morning. Tony, on the other hand, was extremely gay. "Cat got your tongue again, Mrs. Blake? Tony asked with a teasing smile.

"My tongue's all right," she snapped. "So what?"

Tony laughed and pinched her cheek. "See you tonight."

Barbara shrugged her soulders. "After you've seen everybody else."

Tony grinned at her. "You aren't in the world's best humor, are you, sugar?"

"Not that you give a darn," muttered Barbara.

Barbara put in a miserable day She had let her temper get the better of her, and she was sorry. She did not know why she felt so cross slately. Martin Fagg came in while she was having lunch and stayed to sit down with her, but she told him acidly that she preferred to be alone. Martin looked hurt and Barbara tried to smile. "I'm sort of out of sorts today Martin," she said. Her head ached and black spots kept jumping before her eyes. She hoped that she was not really going to be ill.

The theatre was crowded. The presence of the famous Broadway producer had brought out the entire town. Barbara, thinking she was going to have the same place, walked down the aisle, only to find a group of people, among them Pinkney Law and Gloria Havener's parents and sister-in-law, accupying the front row. Her cheeks blazing with humiliation, Barbara went back, intending to walk right out the door and go home, but Martin Fagg met her near the exit. "What's the matter Barbara?" he asked. "Some mixup about seats?"

"Yes. I—I—that is, I guess Tony forgot he had a wife."

"Take my seat, Barbara," urged Martin.

"All right," she gasped, "and thanks, Martin. You're always so thoughtful."

The curtain went up and the lights down in a few minutes. Barbara was grateful for the darkness She was furious at Tony. She had seen his mother and sisters in the front row. He had taken care of seats for them, all right. Barbar's cheeks burned and suddenly she felt sick. What on earth ailed her, she asked herself desperately, and then a thought went through her like a knife. Suppose she were going to have a baby! She simply could not have one now. She had to keep her job. She was certain Tony would not want a child, at any rate not for several years, if he ever wanted one. "It just can't be that," she whispered to herself.

After a while the lights came up again. The applause was terrific. Barbara could scarcely hear herself think. People stood up and yelled, "Author! Author!" Gloria Havener took Tony by the hand and led him out on the stage. Barbara could see neither of them distinctly for the blur in her eyes. Tony made a little curtain speech. It was clever and spontaneous and winning. The crowd cheered and cheered. Apparently the play had been a success.

People were crowding up to congratulate Tony and Gloria. Gloria kept hold of Tony's arm. "What do you think of my find, Pinkney?" she asked the great producer.

Pinkney Law smiled. "You'll hear from me," he said to Tony.

There was an informal reception on the stage. Barbara did not know Martin was standing beside her until he spoke. "Don't you feel well Barbara?" he asked anxiously. "you're so white."

"I'm all right, Martin," she said. "Just tired."

"You don't look all right," he insisted. "Want me to take you home in my car?"

Barbara shook her head.

Tony's mother kissed Gloria. "I can't tell you how grateful I am for what you've done for my son," she murmured.

Gloria smiled wryly. "You can teach a canary to sing," she said, "but he has to be born a canary."

Lily smaled rather sourly. "I hope when you get to be a celebrity, you won't forget us, Tony. We've seen so little of you lately. But I suppose your wife takes up all your spare time."

(To be continued)

KEEP ON Backing the Attack! WITH WAR BONDS

Clean and Grade Your Own Seed with a VAC-A-WAY

Standard equipment, it cleans for wheat, oats, barley, rye, but also, with proper screens, all other small grains, soybeans and grass seed. Ball-bearing mounted, heavy cast iron base.

If You Suffer Distress From Monthly FEMALE WEAKNESS With its Cranky, Nervous Feelings

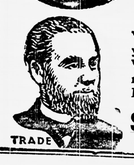
If at such times *you* suffer from cramps, backache, headache, weak, nervous, blue feelings—due to functional monthly disturbances—

Start at *once*—try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to relieve such symptoms. It's *famous* not only to help relieve monthly pain but also accompanying tired, nervous feelings of this nature. This is because of its soothing effect on ONE OF WOMAN'S MOST IMPORTANT ORGANS.

Taken regularly—Pinkham's Compound helps build up resistance against such symptoms. Follow label directions! *Worth trying!*

LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND

GLAD



We're glad that in spite of war shortages you can still get Smith Bros. Cough Drops. We'll be gladder still when Victory lets us make all *everybody* needs. Smith Bros.—Black or Menthol—still 5¢.

SMITH BROS. COUGH DROPS BLACK OR MENTHOL—5¢

TRADE MARK

Mr. Farmer!

BEFORE YOU PLACE YOUR

PUBLIC SALE

ADVERTISING

TRIBUNE OFFICE

AND LET ONE OF THE STAFF HELP YOU

We have a special price for Farm Sales; the same includes Illustrated Sale Posters and Two Issues

Place your ADVERTISING in a Medium that reaches the Buying Public.

Airplane View of Valliant's Plants At Bellevue, Md.

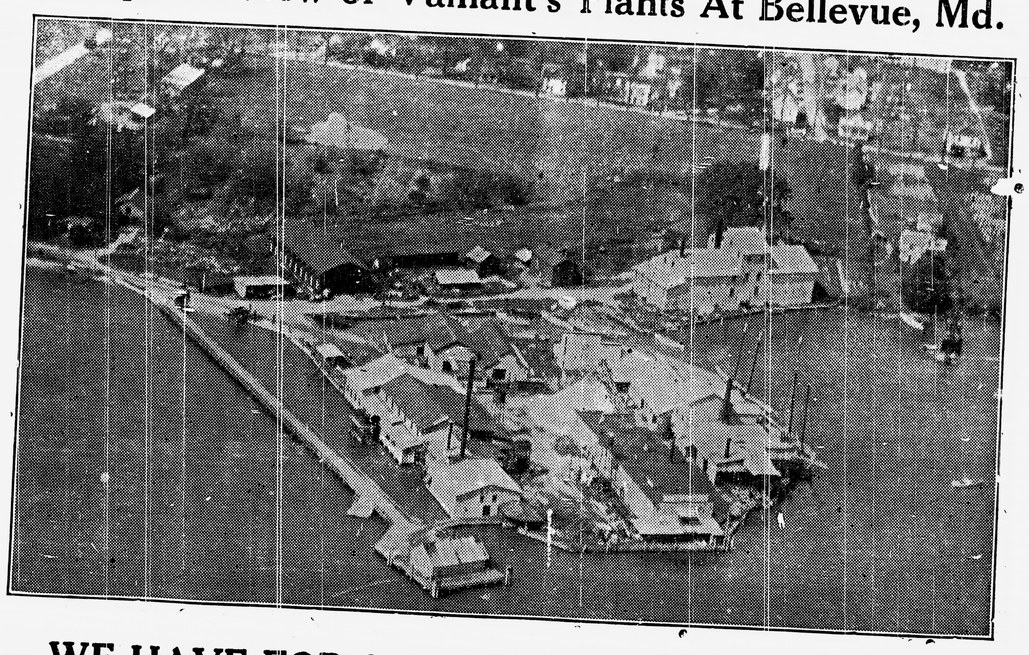


FIG TREES

FOR SALE

BOTH LARGE AND SMALL

VARIETIES

TRANSPLANTING SHOULD BE

DONE DURING OCTOBER, NOVEMBER

OR MARCH.

OYSTERS

CANNED GOODS

CANNED FRUITS

WE HAVE FOR SALE SMALL BUT BEAUTIFUL

FLOWERING MIMOSA TREES

If interested visit our garden while in bloom.

LIME - FERTILIZER - POULTRY SHELL

W. H. Valliant & Bro.

BELLEVUE

Phones: St. Michaels 74F
62F31 --- 62F1

MARYLAND